

Treutlen County Board of Education

GARY J. WALDEN, Superintendent

Treutlen County Schools are Accredited by the
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

202 Third Street
SOPERTON, GEORGIA 30457
(912) 529-4228

MAY 1 1997

April 24, 1997

The Honorable Reed Hundt, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW, Room 844
Washington, DC 20554

RE: CC Docket No. 96-45

Dear Chairman Hundt:

I am the superintendent from Treutlen County Schools, and I am writing to express my gratitude for the actions you have taken to ensure that all school districts will have affordable access to the Information Superhighway.

Educators in our system are very concerned about preparing the workforce of tomorrow. The Telecommunications Act and the Federal-State Joint Board decision will guarantee that all school districts will have the opportunity to connect to the Internet and, in our case, be able to continue to provide distance-learning opportunities. It is important to bring these services directly to the classroom where students learn. Thus, your inclusion of internal classroom connections for discounts is crucial.

We currently have one dial-in connection to the Internet at two of our three schools. Needless to say, we cannot meet the needs of all our students with this limited access. These discounts would allow us to provide the wonderful resources available on the Information Superhighway to a greater numbers of students, a benefit magnified by our inaccessibility to more traditional resources that are available to schools in more populated parts of our state.

Our students need deep discounts for telecommunications services this year. I urge the FCC to fully support the Joint Board's discount plan for universal service for schools.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Gary J. Walden
Superintendent

**APPALACHIAN
REGIONAL
COMMISSION** *A Proud Past,
A New Vision*

Office of the Federal Co-Chairman

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

| | | | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|------|---------|-------------|---|
| Post-it Fax Note | 7671 | Date | 4/29/97 | # of pages | 3 |
| To | Lygia Ricciardi | | From | H. R. R. R. | |
| Co./Dept | FCC | | Co. | ARC | |
| Phone # | | | Phone # | | |
| Fax # | 202-418-2807 | | Fax # | | |

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

April 28, 1997

Hand delivered FCC Today Expires to Chang, Guello, Mess

RECEIVED

MAY 1 1997

The Honorable Reed Hundt EX PARTE OR LATE FILED
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, N.W., Room 814
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Hundt:

The Federal Communications Commission's findings on Universal Service that will be released on May 8, 1997 will have a very significant impact on the 399 counties that are served by the Appalachian Regional Commission [ARC]. The ARC serves parts of 12 states from New York to Mississippi, and all of West Virginia.

The ARC fully supports the FCC in its leadership role in encouraging an environment of competition between different service providers. The ARC believes that the FCC should provide a support subsidy system for toll-free access to the Internet for educational and telehealth users, and advocates a subsidy program that will provide rural areas with the opportunity to develop the state-of-the-art telecommunications services that are needed to ensure an educated, healthy, and ready to work population.

For more than 25 years the Appalachian Regional Commission has had an active interest in the role that telecommunications technology can play in helping move the Appalachian region into the nation's economic mainstream. Starting in 1972, the ARC partnered with NASA, the University of Kentucky, and the country of India to launch a satellite that would deliver educational programs to schools and communities across Appalachia. The ARC helped to finance all types of downlink facilities, including satellite dishes and microwave equipment, in order to distribute the educational programming throughout the region. The satellite was eventually re-positioned over India, where it provided similar educational services.

Since 1989 the ARC has funded more than 40 advanced full motion and compressed video and computer-based telecommunication networks that serve the educational, medical, government, and business sectors throughout the region. Many of these networks have been expanded several times over the past 8 years. Nearly all of these networks are utilizing fiber optic or T1 lines that cross LATAs. In most instances these networks have been set up utilizing "special rates" offered by the respective telephone companies that serve the region. These special rates in many cases are about to expire or have already expired. In one instance, the telephone rate increased nearly 4 ½ times the original "introductory" rate.

Mr. Reed Hundt
April 28, 1997
Page 2

If similar significant rate increases occur, many users will simply turn off the equipment or disconnect from the network. When sites are disconnected, the entire community and its service area lose a valuable access to the Information Highway.

The ARC has supported the funding of these advanced telecommunication services because it feels that access to information is a critical element in a comprehensive economic development strategy for any community or organization. The ARC, as a Federal agency, has recognized and addressed the overall importance of the need for telecommunications services throughout the agency's Strategic Plan, which the Appalachian Governors and I unanimously adopted in 1996. The Commission believes that, unless the region is served by an affordable telecommunication system, Appalachia will be by-passed by the "Information Highway" just as the Interstate Highway System by-passed the region in the 1950's and 1960's. We believe that advanced telecommunication services are absolutely essential in building a sustainable economic base in a community.

As you know, the Appalachian region is comprised of many low and moderate income communities that are geographically isolated from major urban areas where there are numerous telecommunication services offered at affordable rates. The Appalachian region needs to have the same choices of bandwidths up to and including 1.54 Mbps necessary for the provision of telemedicine / telehealth care services, educational, governmental, and business sector uses that the more urban areas are already enjoying at this time.

If the rural Universal Service Rates are not comparable to urban service rates, the impact will be substantial and detrimental and will impair the Commission's—and the nation's—effort to give Appalachia a full seat at the table of American prosperity:

- rural areas will become less desirable places for businesses to operate from or locate in;
- many rural hospitals will cease to exist as the primary care site for communities, potentially resulting in a general decline in the overall health of a region and adversely affecting business recruiting activities;
- many doctors and other health care providers will not locate in rural areas unless they feel they can be supported by advanced telemedicine / telehealth services from the major urban areas;
- educational opportunities for traditional K-12 students will not be competitive with those in urban areas, impeding the effort to achieve the National Education Goals

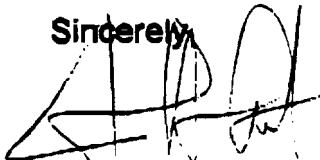
Mr. Reed Hundt
April 28, 1997
Page 3

- adult learners attempting to enter or re-enter the workforce (including welfare-to-work participants), as well as those needing skills upgrades, will not have access to current workforce training opportunities;
- local governments will lack the ability to more easily make their services conveniently available to their customers.

In short, if an affordable rural Universal Service rate structure is not put into place, the rural areas of Appalachia will become undesirable areas in which to live, operate a business, have access to adequate educational training, or secure adequate health care. The nation must have a carefully crafted subsidy program that takes into account the need to reduce distance-based telephone charges in education and telehealth-related services in rural areas.

I encourage you and your fellow Commissioners to keep these needs of Appalachia in mind as you craft your final rules on Universal Service. Please let me know if you or your staff desire any additional information about our telecommunications work in the region.

Sincerely,



JESSE L. WHITE, JR.
Federal Co-Chairman

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

April 28, 1997

Reed E. Hundt
Chair
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554-0001

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MAY 1 1997

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the physician groups listed below, which represent over 300,000 individual physicians from across the country, we are writing to urge you to support the full implementation of the "universal service" provisions of the "Telecommunications Act of 1996." As you know, the universal service provisions of the Act mandate the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to direct telecommunications rate subsidies to, among other groups, "rural health care providers." The law explicitly states that the FCC must make telecommunications rates for eligible health care providers and physicians comparable to telecommunications rates for similar services in both urban and rural areas. We strongly encourage you to immediately implement the so-called Snowe, Rockefeller, Exon, Kerrey provisions of the Act because we believe it to be important to the growth of telemedicine and would allow for greater access to health care services in rural and underserved areas.

The Act specifically mandates that telecommunications carriers provide telecommunications services to health care providers serving patients in rural areas at rates comparable to rates in urban areas. In addition, the FCC's own Advisory Committee on Telecommunications and Health Care has stated that the "discounted rate is critical to the success of rural telemedicine, and the comparable urban rate should eliminate differences in urban and rural rates created by distance." As Congress intended, we believe the definition of "rate" should be construed broadly.

Many dedicated physicians and health care professionals provide essential medical services in small private offices, often in remote and isolated areas across the country. In order to be able to continue to provide quality health care services, individuals practicing in rural areas must often pay excessively high long-distance charges just to be able to access Internet and other telecommunications services. The ability to access these and many other services at affordable rate would allow physicians and health care providers to deliver the best health services possible.

FAX COVER SHEET

American Medical Association
Physicians dedicated to the health of America



AMA Division of Legislative Counsel
1101 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20005
Reply Fax Number (202) 789-7401

Date: 4/29

To: Lysein Ricciardi

From: Curtis Rooney

Division of Legislative Counsel

Phone number: (202) 789-7423

Message: We were only able to get ACK on this letter. As you can probably tell, the medical world has not engaged on this one. Let me know if you have questions.

2

We urge you to support the "universal access" provisions of the Act because we believe that these provisions are fair and would improve the quality of health services in many needed areas of the United States.

Sincerely,

American College of Radiology

American Medical Association

cc: James H. Quello, Rachelle B. Chong, Susan Ness, Regina M. Keeney

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

Jenifer Elementary School

2820 Jenifer School Lane, Waldorf, Maryland 20603

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

FAX

Date:

4/28/97

Number of pages including cover sheet:

2

To:

Rachelle B. Chong
Federal Comm. Commission
1919 M Street NW
Washington DC 20554

Phone:

Fax phone:

202/411/2820

CC:

From:

Jenifer School
2820 Jenifer School Lane
Waldorf MD 20603

Phone:

301-932-9603 / 753-1768

Fax phone:

301-574-9496

REMARKS:

☐

Urgent

☐

For your review

☐

Reply ASAP

☐

Please comment

April 22, 1997

MAY 1 1997

Commissioner Rachelle B. Chong
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street NW
Washington, DC 20554

RE: CC Docket No. 96-45

Dear Commissioner Chong:

Jenifer Elem.
We are faculty and staff from *Charles County* in Maryland. We are writing in support of the Universal Service discounts for schools and libraries that have been recommended by the Joint Board.

We would like to thank you for your dedication in ensuring that all schools and libraries will have affordable access to the Information Superhighway.

The Telecommunications Act and the Joint Board discount plan will guaranteed that even the poorest schools will have the opportunity to connect to the Internet and provide distance-learning opportunities. The \$2.25 billion a year will address the needs of all our schools, and, importantly, the plan will bring services directly to the classroom where students learn. Your inclusion of internal classroom connections for discount is vital. This plan is essential for preparing the workforce of tomorrow.

Our students need deep discounts for telecommunications services this year. We urge the FCC to fully support the Joint Board's discount plan for universal services for schools and libraries.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

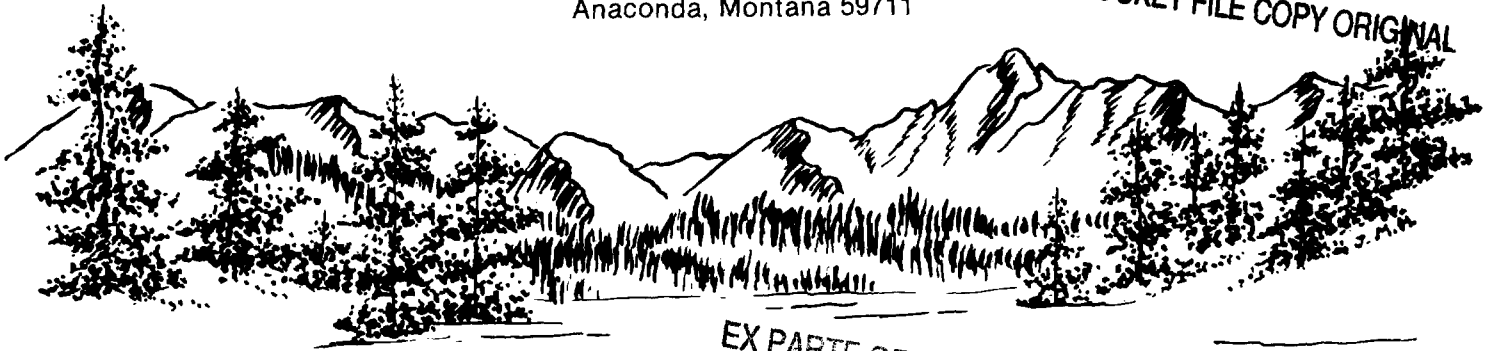
Mari Carter
Kimberly Lutz
Connie Surin
Lenora Bono
Jane Thomas
Jeanne Skindon
Duana Caxner

Bruce Ford
Stephanie Swisher
Julie Jole
Melissa H. Knapp
Kimberly Wehner
Forrest M. Scales

ANACONDA-DEER LODGE COUNTY

Courthouse - 800 South Main
Anaconda, Montana 59711

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Superintendent of Schools

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

Telephone (406)563-8421
Ext. 248

April 23, 1997

MAY 1 1997

The Honorable Rachelle B. Chong, Commissioner
Federal Communication Commission
1919 M Street, Room 844
Washington, DC 20554

RE: CC Docket No. 96-45

Dear Commission Members:

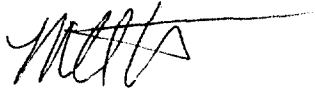
I am the County Superintendent of Schools for Deer Lodge County in Montana, and I would like to thank each of you for your efforts to ensure that school districts and educational consortia will have affordable access to the Information Superhighway. In rural areas such as ours access to the Information Superhighway connects our students to people and experiences they would not otherwise access.

Our schools in Deer Lodge County have made tremendous strides in introducing technology into classrooms and making computer connected information sources available to every student. However, the increasing costs of these services in a time when school funding is critical makes the continuation of these services precarious at best.

The Telecommunications Act and the Federal-State Joint Board decision will guarantee that our school districts will continue to have opportunity to connect to the Internet and provide distance-learning experiences to our students. The \$2.25 billion per year will address the needs of all schools, and continue efforts to bring these services directly in the classroom where students learn. Including discounts for internal classroom connections needs to remain a corner stone of this plan and this plan is essential to the adequate preparation of tomorrow's work force.

Our students and schools need deep discounts for telecommunications services this year. I urge the FCC to fully support the Joint Board's discount plan for universal service to schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. O'Rourke', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Michael O'Rourke MEd, LCPC
County Superintendent of Schools

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
State Budget and Control Board
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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OFFICE OF
COMMISSIONER
RACHELLE B. CHONG

APR 29 10 50 AM '97

EX-108
PARTIAL OR LATE FILED

DAVID M. BEASLEY, CHAIRMAN
GOVERNOR

RICHARD A. ECKSTROM
STATE TREASURER

EARLE E. MORRIS, JR.
COMPTROLLER GENERAL



P.O. BOX 12444
COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA 29211
(803) 734-2320

JOHN DRUMMOND
CHAIRMAN, SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

HENRY E. BROWN, JR.
CHAIRMAN, WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

LUTHER F. CARTER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

April 28, 1997

MAY 1 1997

The Honorable Rachelle B. Chong
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
Room 844
1919 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Federal-State Joint Board Recommendations
on Universal Service (CC Docket No. 96-45)

Dear Commissioner Chong:

On behalf of the State of South Carolina, I would like to urge the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") to implement promptly the general recommendations of the Federal-State Joint Board relating to universal service support for K-12 schools and for libraries. There are a few minor details of the Joint Board's recommendations for school/library support that should be modified to make the program administratively more manageable. Specifically, the rules should expressly recognize that state agencies may file consolidated requests for universal service support on behalf of their schools and libraries, and the Universal Fund Administrator should be instructed to accept such consolidated filings. (South Carolina and other states have been in contact with the FCC's staff on these and other matters.) Overall, however, the Joint Board's recommendations are critical to the success of the combined efforts of federal, state and local governments to ensure that all of our children have access to the basic telecommunications resources necessary for enhanced learning and interaction with the burgeoning worldwide electronic information storehouse.

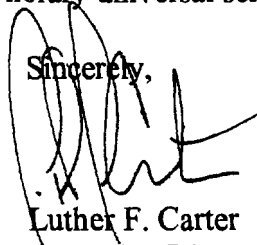
We in South Carolina have recognized for some time the tremendous importance of having our schools and libraries connected to the Internet. In 1996, at my behest, our legislature appropriated \$10 million to connect our K-12 schools and our libraries to the Internet. As of April 1, 1997, we had completed dedicated connections of approximately 620 schools and libraries. We expect to connect the remaining 697 schools and libraries by December, 1997.

But much more needs to be done in South Carolina and elsewhere. We need to train our teachers to bring the full potential of the Internet and other technologies into their classrooms. We need to acquire additional computers and related technology to ensure that our schools and libraries are adequately equipped to meet the needs of their respective student and user populations. We need to enhance the use of live video instruction capabilities (including interactive video conferencing) that have been pioneered by the South Carolina Educational Television System. And we need to ensure that every one of our students (especially those in the most disadvantaged school districts) has the maximum opportunity to use the educational tools made possible through computers and communications technology.

The school/library universal service proposals will go a long way toward helping us achieve our objectives. Although South Carolina already has committed to connect our schools and libraries to the Internet, the availability of universal service support will enable us to free up funds for the important related tasks listed above and many others that are essential to providing our children with a quality education.

We in South Carolina very much appreciate the support that you, the FCC, the Joint Board, Congress and the Administration have given to this endeavor. We urge the FCC to take the next step by promptly adopting rules that will implement the Joint Board's basic recommendations on school/library universal service support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. F. Carter', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Luther F. Carter
Executive Director

cc: Barbara Nielsen
State Superintendent of Education

Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW, Room 844
Washington, DC 20554

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL
EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

RE: CC Docket No. 96-45

MAY 1 1997

Dear Commissioner Chong:

Being a Maintenance Supervisor for the Iroquois School District for the past 20 years, I know all too well how schools use money from their general fund budgets to pay for the \$500.00 per month T1 lines and wiring for the classrooms in order to teach our students about telecommunications. I also know how financially depressed our school district is from our local business, General Electric. General Electric continues to ask for a tax reassessment and having it lowered, paying less and less tax each year. But on the other hand, General Electric expects well trained or fully trained employees, right out of school, to run their NC machines and other computerized systems.

I have also worked with our local phone company and have found a lot of resistance in helping or doing telecommunications in the schools. Just where **Will** people learn about all the new advantages and operations dealing with telecommunications?

On the street like our kids used to with sex?

We have a system to learn from, but it is being tied up and priced out of the reach for our students. I hope you will keep all students in full view when you vote on the E-Rate

The Telecommunications Act and the Federal-State Joint Board discount plan

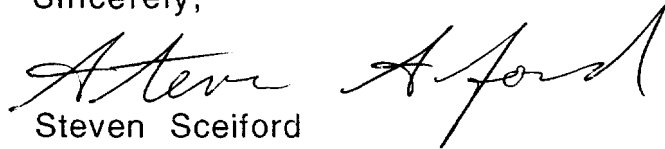
Will guarantee that even the poorest schools will have the opportunity to connect to the Internet and provide distance-learning opportunities. The \$2.25 billion a year will address the needs of all our schools, and importantly, the plan will bring services directly to the classroom where students learn. Your inclusion of internal classroom connections for discounts is vital. This plan is essential for preparing the workforce of tomorrow.

Our students need deep discounts for telecommunications services this year.

I urge the FCC to fully support of the Joint Board's discount plan for universal service for schools and libraries.

Thank you.

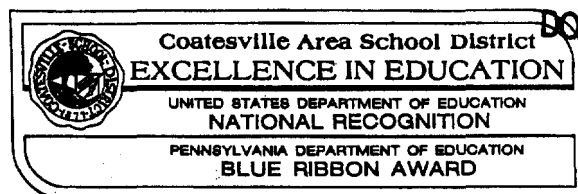
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Steve Sceiford".

Steven Sceiford
522 Nobel Ave
Erie, PA. 16511
814-898-2095

School Board

Leonard A. Fredericks
President
Clarence W. Smith
Vice President
John H. Hamilton
Roger McGuigan
Linda R. Messinger
G. David Patrylak
Hugh J. Redditt, Jr.
Patrick H. Sellers
Dr. Russell H. Vreeland



1515 E. Lincoln Highway
Coatesville, PA 19320-2494
(610) 383-7900 Fax (610) 384-2086

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Louis M. Laurento, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Paul J. Bentley, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent

Nicholas Malobabich
Business Administrator

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

April 22, 1997

RECEIVED

MAY 1 1997

Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

The Honorable Rachelle B. Chong
Commissioner
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW, Room 844
Washington, DC 20554

RE: CC Docket No. 96-45

Dear Commissioner Chong:

I am the Assistant Superintendent from the Coatesville Area School District and I would like to thank you for your dedication in ensuring that all schools and libraries will have affordable access to the Information Superhighway.

The Telecommunications Act and the Federal State Joint Board discount plan will guarantee that even the poorest schools will have the opportunity to connect to the Internet and provide distance-learning opportunities. The \$2.25 billion a year will address the needs of all our schools, and more importantly, the plan will bring services directly to the classroom where students learn. Your inclusion of internal classroom connections for discounts is vital. This plan is essential for preparing the workforce of tomorrow.

The Coatesville Area School District, with a state aid ratio of .5381 and an equalized millage in the top quartile, is limited in its ability to make a significant investment to expand its technology base. As a result, technology has not been developed to its full potential, lacks connectivity beyond the school walls, and has not been integrated within the curriculum. The district has not been able to fund a comprehensive technology training program thus denying students and community of the benefits that could be derived if a program were in place.

The Honorable Rachelle B. Chong

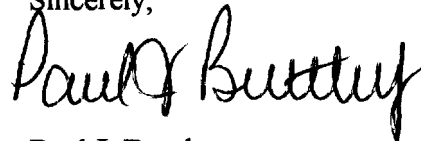
April 22, 1997

Page 2

Our students need deep discounts for telecommunications services this year. I urge the FCC to fully support the Joint Board's discount plan for universal service for schools and libraries.

Again, thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul J. Bentley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Paul" being more prominent than the last name "Bentley".

Paul J. Bentley

Assistant Superintendent

PJB/etl



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Assistant Secretary for Communications
and Information
Washington, D.C. 20230

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RECEIVED

MAY 1 1997

Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

The Honorable Reed E. Hundt
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service, CC
Docket No. 96-45

Dear Chairman Hundt:

On May 8, the Commission intends to issue an order fulfilling the mandate of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (1996 Act) to establish a new framework for ensuring that basic telephone service remains available and affordable for all Americans. That order will doubtless build on the recommendations by the Federal-State Joint Board, which are the fruit of close and conscientious collaboration between Federal and State regulators. As the Commission completes its review of the many comments on the Joint Board's recommendations and prepares its own decision, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) would like to reiterate and to reinforce its views on several of the principal issues under consideration.

1. Connecting Schools and Libraries

As the Commission is aware, NTIA strongly supports the basic tenets of the Joint Board's recommendations concerning the provision and funding of essential telecommunications services to our nation's schools and libraries. For example, we believe that the proposed level of support for schools and libraries -- \$2.25 billion -- is a reasonable estimate of the amount required annually to provide necessary services to those institutions, although the Commission and the Joint Board should reassess that level periodically to ensure that it is neither excessive nor inadequate.

We also strongly urge that the widest feasible range of providers should be entitled to receive money from the universal service fund if they furnish qualifying services to schools and libraries at discounted rates. Section 254(h)(2)(A) of the 1996 Act charges the Commission with establishing "competitively neutral rules" to enhance access by those entities to both "telecommunication and information services." Maximizing the number of eligible providers would likely increase the number of

potential suppliers to schools and libraries. Additional competition should, in turn, reduce the prices that those institutions must pay, as well as expand the range of services, particularly advanced telecommunications and information services, made available to them. Moreover, competition will ensure a more efficient use of the fund as prices are pushed downward.

Finally, the Commission should ensure that mechanisms are in place to implement the discount plan. Thus, for example, it should not only select a Fund Administrator, but it should clearly delineate the Administrator's duties (e.g., assessing and collecting contributions to the fund from carriers, disbursing funds to service providers, maintaining a database of services provided and rates charged to particular schools and libraries for use by others). The Commission should also, in NTIA's view, specify that Requests for Proposals (RFPs) should be the vehicles by which schools and libraries solicit and providers furnish qualifying telecommunications services.

2. Rural Health Care Clinics

The 1996 Act establishes the principle that rural health care providers are entitled to receive "telecommunications services which are necessary for the provision of health care services" at prices that "are reasonably comparable to rates charged for similar services in urban areas."^{1/} NTIA believes that the largest pricing disadvantage faced by rural health care providers are the distance and usage charges associated with many of the services they purchase. For example, the average annual charge for a T-1 circuit in rural areas is at least three times that in urban areas. Similarly, if a rural health care provider wishes to connect to an Internet Service Provider in order to access and retrieve medical information, the provider frequently must incur toll charges that an urban counterpart does not. For these reasons, NTIA recommends that the Commission take appropriate steps now to ensure that qualifying services provided to rural health care providers do not include distance-sensitive elements and that those providers do not have to pay toll charges to access the Internet.

3. Support to High Cost Areas

One of the most contentious aspects of the universal service debate concerns the amount of support needed to ensure affordable service for subscribers living in high cost areas, including rural areas. NTIA favors a strong high cost program and has endorsed the Joint Board's tentative recommendation to use so-called proxy models to quantify the amount of subsidies needed.

^{1/} 47 U.S.C. § 254(h)(1)(A).

We understand, however, that there are legitimate questions about the ability of existing models to estimate accurately the costs of serving rural and other high cost areas. We endorse the adoption of an interim plan until such time as the new scheme is workable. Any such plan should hold steady the existing support for high cost areas, while minimizing the imposition of new assessments while further work is completed. We strongly urge the Commission to continue the Joint Board process and to work with stakeholders to improve on the existing proxy models to make them a suitable vehicle for calculating high cost support.

In addition, we urge the Commission and State regulators to coordinate their policies, particularly with regard to universal service and other interstate and intrastate pricing reforms, to ensure that the new Federal universal service regime is synchronized with the removal of implicit subsidies, thus prohibiting double recovery of costs.

4. Consumer Impacts

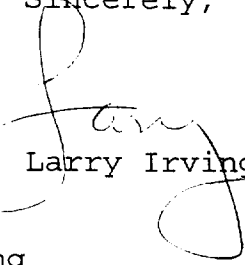
At the same time that the Commission issues its universal service order, other proceedings to implement the 1996 Act are pending on both the Federal and State levels. We believe that it is important to implement the various reforms necessitated by the Act in a manner that maximizes consumer benefits and avoids unreasonable rate shock.

The introduction of meaningful and effective competition into all segments of the telecommunication market will best provide consumers with the promises of the Act -- better choice in price and service. In this regard, we applaud the Commission and the State commissions for their vigilant efforts to implement the interconnection provisions of the Act. We appreciate the difficulty in predicting when the full effects of competition will be felt by a wide range of consumers and understand the need for transition mechanisms to move from a monopoly to a competitive market. At the same time, we urge the Commission to take immediate action to achieve a number of consumer benefits envisioned by the Act, such as affordable service to schools, libraries, and rural health care clinics, continued support for customers in high cost areas, and reductions in rates that consumers ultimately pay.

In this regard, the Commission apparently plans to complete its pending rulemaking to reform interstate access charges. A number of different plans have been offered for restructuring existing access charges, including comments filed by NTIA. In assessing these various proposals, and in crafting a new access charge plan, we urge the Commission to keep its eyes on the fundamental objective -- an access regime that garners for consumers the benefits of local and long distance competition, promotes efficient investment in the nation's telecommunications

infrastructure and, most importantly, protects customers from sharp and sudden rate increases. By so doing, the Commission will assure that its actions in the access charge proceeding will be compatible with the central purpose of universal service reform -- to make affordable basic telephone service available to all Americans.

Sincerely,



Larry Irving

cc: Commissioner James H. Quello
Commissioner Rachelle B. Chong
Commissioner Susan Ness

Prince Street School

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

400 Prince Street
Salisbury, Maryland 21804
(410) 749-6735

FAX TRANSMISSION COVER SHEET

Date: 4-30-97
To: Rachelle Chong
Fax: 202-418-2820
Re:
Sender:

YOU SHOULD RECEIVE PAGE(S), INCLUDING THIS
COVER SHEET. IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE ALL THE PAGES, PLEASE CALL
(410) 749-6735.

PRINCE STREET SCHOOL

400 Prince Street
Salisbury, MD 21804
phone 410-749-6735 fax 410-341-3916

RECEIVED

MAY 1 1997

Federal Communications Commission
Office of Secretary

Commissioner Rachelle B. Chong
Communications Commission
1919 M Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20554

RE: CC Docket No. 96-45

Dear Commissioner Chong:

We are faculty and staff from Prince Street School, Wicomico County, in Maryland. We are writing in support of the Universal Service discounts for schools and libraries that have been recommended by the Joint Board.

We would like to thank you for your dedication in ensuring that all schools and libraries will have affordable access to the Information Superhighway.

The Telecommunications Act and the Joint Board discount plan will guarantee that even the poorest schools will have the opportunity to connect to the Internet and provide distance-learning opportunities. The \$2.25 billion a year will address the needs of all our schools, and, importantly, the plan will bring services directly to the classroom where students learn. Your inclusion of internal classroom connections for discounts is vital. This plan is essential for preparing the work force of tomorrow.

Our county has been fortunate in that a local provider has given our school free access for two years. This is the second year. In order for the schools to maintain this service, monies that might be spent on new access may have to be placed on hold. We have committees in place to write grants to provide as much monies as possible to put computers in every classroom, thus giving internet access to all students.

Our students need deep discounts for telecommunications services this year. We urge the FCC to fully support the Joint Board's discount plan for universal service for schools and libraries.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Faculty and Staff of Prince Street School
(See attached sheet for signatures and addresses.)

PRINCE STREET SCHOOL

400 Prince Street

Salisbury, MD 21804

phone 410-749-6735 fax 410-341-3916

April 28, 1997

I, the undersigned, am in favor of the funding of CC Docket No. 96-45.

| DATE | NAME | ADDRESS, CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE |
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| 4-29-97 | Debbre Link | 8462 Ascot Place, Delmar, MD 21875 |
| 4-29-97 | Jacqueline Jones | 109 Terrapin Ln. Salisbury, MD 21804 |
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| 4-29-97 | Marilyn Moreno | 211 W. Philadelphia Ave. Salis. MD 21804 |
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